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Kernan Announces Grants to Train 2,311 Workers at Three South Central Indiana Companies

INDIANAPOLIS — Lt. Governor Joe Kernan announced today that three south central Indiana companies have been awarded over \$320,000 in training grants from the Indiana Department of Commerce's Skills Enhancement Fund.

"We are proud to partner with companies that are dedicated to improving the skills of their workforce," said Kernan, director of the Department of Commerce and leader of the state's economic development efforts. "By offering the training necessary to get ahead as well as upgrading equipment, these businesses will remain competitive for years to come."

- **Gecom Corp.**, Greensburg, has been awarded a \$200,000 grant to retrain 1,873 incumbent employees as part of a \$12.8 million capital investment in building and equipment upgrades. Gecom was established in 1987 and has grown to become the largest door latch-manufacturing base in the U.S. The company will use the grant to train employees in forklift operation, gauge reading, problem solving and other technical skills.
- **Lowe's Home Centers Inc.**, North Vernon, has been awarded an \$85,500 grant to train 200 existing and 101 new employees following a \$1.1 million investment in new equipment and building upgrades. The distribution center, with service to 123 Lowe's stores, was established in 1994 and is the first automated facility for Lowe's Companies. Lowe's Home Centers will use the grant to train employees in packing, shipping and receiving.
- **Tree of Life Inc.**, Bloomington, has been awarded a \$37,500 grant to train 15 new and 122 existing employees as part of a \$2.2 million investment in equipment and building upgrades. Founded in 1970, Tree of Life markets and distributes a variety of natural and organic goods, protein drinks, vitamins and herbal supplements, among other things. Using the grant, employees will work on team building and quality training as well as training in math and computer skills.

add 1/ Region 10 Skills Enhancement Fund Release

Commerce awards Skills Enhancement Fund grants to Indiana companies that undertake capital investment projects. The grants help defray the costs of training new and current employees in basic work skills and company-specific skills necessary to support the project. Companies interested in learning more about the Skills Enhancement Fund or other Commerce programs should contact Commerce's Existing Business Office at 800.463.8081, or visit the Web site at www.indianacommerce.com.

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